

Date: March 15, 2011

To: Captain James Bauman, LCSO

cc: Vickie Sanders, Calif. State Parks and OHMVR Division

Re: Proposed LCSO OHV Enforcement Project Grant

Dear Capt. Bauman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Lake County Sheriffs' Office (LCSO) application for an OHV Enforcement Project grant.

The Konocti Regional Trails Master Plan (KRTMP) committee fully supports the proposed LCSO OHV enforcement project, with a few comments/suggestions listed below. The KRTMP is a county-based program falling under the direction of Kim Clymire, Lake County Director of Public Services. The project consists of proposed non-motorized land and water-based trails encircling Clear Lake and other sections of Lake County that will highlight Lake County's natural beauty, culture, and history. The Master Plan was developed over a three-year period that included a series of public workshops and focused staff meetings and resulted in unanimous adoption by the Lake County Board of Supervisors on January 11, 2011.

The KRT Master Plan is divided into six study areas, one of which is the Northshore Study Area encompassing the communities of Nice, Lucerne, Glenhaven and Clearlake Oaks. The intent is to provide a ridgeline trail along the hills above Hwy 20, with connections to the communities and to adjacent recreational areas, such as Cow Mountain and Cache Creek. The trails will be planned on public properties, and by acquiring dedications and/or easements for trail creation, maintenance, and use on private lands with willing property owners.

The OHV Enforcement Project primarily focuses on the federal lands of Cow Mountain and Mendocino National Forest, with 20 hours/month potentially devoted to private lands throughout the county. The project identifies the paper subdivisions and hills above Nice and Lucerne as areas of frequent OHV trespass, as well as the communities of Spring Valley and Hidden Valley Lake.

The steep terrain located above Nice, Lucerne and Clearlake Oaks have more than 10,000 inadequately-sized lots commonly referred to as 'paper subdivisions' which were created in the early 20th century by land speculators without providing proper infrastructure to support development - and often on land that was geographically unsuitable for development. Most of these are currently undevelopable, and have been designated "Substandard Older Subdivisions" in Lake County's newly approved Shoreline Area Plan.

The majority of lot owners are absentee or unaware of the actual location of their lots; trespassing has become a major issue in these areas. The trespassing of most concern is illegal dumping and off highway vehicle (OHV) use. These activities lead to a number of issues including high wildfire risk, increased erosion and landslides. Erosion is exacerbated by illegal OHV activity and trails, resulting in the degradation of topsoil and vegetation on steep slopes. These sources contribute to increased sedimentation into Clear Lake, promoting algae blooms can adversely impact aquatic life, lower water quality and has a direct economic impact on the tourism industry.

For these reasons, it is important to limit human activity and development in these areas as much as possible.

Additionally, while the KRT trails system is non-motorized, one of the major concerns of land owners in granting a trail easement, is the potential illegal OHV usage of the trail on their property. Development of the OHV Enforcement and Off Road Response Team, expanded physical presence in these locations, and strong public outreach, could help allay property owner concerns.

We request consideration of the following:

- Inclusion of Clearlake Oaks - particularly the area above Mountainview Rd and along High Valley Road - into the project as an area of frequent OHV trespass. This area is also a steep paper subdivision that has been scarred by illegal OHV activity.
- Expansion of the project hours and team visibility on private lands, particularly paper subdivision lots, above Hwy 20. Illegal OHV usage in the steep terrains are causing major erosion issues resulting in soil instability and potential run-off/nutrient loading into Clear Lake.
- Creation of an OHV Enforcement Hotline, in which citizens could report the times and locations of illegal OHV activity on private lands. This feedback could help the Response Team focus on specific areas and times of concern.
- OHV Youth Transit System: One reason for illegal OHV activity in the hills along Hwy 20 is the lack of visible property owners, and proximity to youth's homes. Possibly a "once a month" or during the summer months a "once a week" public transit system, transporting youth, their bikes and an appropriate adult supervisor, to approved OHV trails might alleviate some of the problems.

Policing and enforcement of illegal OHV use in the above mentioned areas will be crucial to the success of obtaining trail easements and the subsequent use of developed trails. We therefore respectfully request that this issue be given careful consideration as a key component in this grant application.

Once again, we are highly supportive of the project. Members of the KRT team would be very happy to work with the Response Team, to point out areas of concern.

Holly Harris
KRTMP Committee Member
Clearlake Oaks
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cc: Kim Clymire, Debra Sommerfield, Alan Flora, Chuck Lamb